

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

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INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 COME-00 EB-08 LAB-04 SIL-01 TRSE-00
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P 241040Z AUG 77
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIRORITY 5470

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 18794

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELAB, TH
SUBJECT: AAFLI'S PROGRAM IN THAILAND

REF: STATE 200420

1. THE CHARGE MET ON AUGUST 24, 1977 WITH AAFLI REPRESENTATIVES EMILIO GARZA, VALENTIN SUAZO, JR., AND ROBERT R. HANSEN. MEETING EARLIER SCHEDULED AT CHARGE'S REQUEST TO DISCUSS AAFLI SITUATION. CHARGE USED OPPORTUNITY FOR IN DEPTH DISCUSSION OF LABOR SITUATION IN THAILAND AS WELL AS AALFI'S OPERATIONAL DIFFICULTIES.

2. COUNTRY PROGRAM DIRECTOR SUAZO SAID THAT IN MEETING ON AUGUST 2 WITH SUWIT YINGWORAPHAN, DIRECTOR GENERAL, DEPARTMENT OF LABOR (DOL), SUWIT TOLD AAFLI TO SUSPEND ALL ACTIVITIES. CONSEQUENTLY AAFLI HAS STOPPED ALL ONGOING PROGRAMS INCLUDING ENGLISH LANGUAGE COURSES AND SUPPORT OF VARIOUS UNION SOCIAL ACTIVITIES. AAFLI REPRESENTATIVES ARE, HOWEVER, MAINTAINING INFORMAL CONTACTS WITH THAI LABOR LEADERS.

3. REGIONAL REPRESENTATIVE GARZA, WHO ALSO ATTENDED AUGUST 2 MEETING, SAID SUWIT JUSTIFIED ACTION ON BASIS THAT THAI NATIONAL SECURITY REQUIRES ALL FOREIGN ORGANIZATIONS BE " REVIEWED, STUDIED AND REREGISTERED."

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GARZA BELIEVES THAT LENGTHY REGISTRATION PROCESS WOULD LEAVE AAFLI INACTIVE FOR INDETERMINATE PERIOD OF TIME AND PUT AAFLI IN UNTENABLE POSITION VIS-A-VIS LABOR CLIENTS AT TIME RTG DISMANTLING PUBLIC SECTOR UNIONS AND RESTRICTING NORMAL UNION ACTIVITIES.

4. AAFLI REPORESENTIVIVES EXPRESSED DEEP CONCERN ABOUT COURSE OF RTG LABOR POLICY. THEY BELIEVE RTG EFFORTS TO CONTROL ORGANIZED

LABOR WILL PROVE COUNTERPRODUCTIVE AND ONLY FORCE LABOR LEADERS TO ADOPT MORE RADICAL APPROACH. THEY STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF MEETING SCHEDULED FOR AUGUST 25 AT DOL TO ELECT FIVE LABOR REPRESENTATIVES TO THE LABOR DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL. THEY BELIEVE THIS MEETING WILL PROVIDE INDICATION WHETHER RTG WILL PUSH CONFRONTATION OR BACK OFF IN ITS EFFORTS TO WEAKEN THE ORGANIZED LABOR MOVEMENT.

5. GARZA SAID HE PLANS TO RETURN TO WASHINGTON NEXT WEEK FOR DISCUSSIONS AT AAFLI/AFL-CIO HEADQUARTERS ON A PROPOSED MAJOR INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC ACTION PROGRAM AGAINST RTG AND ITS LABOR POLICY. (JAN KULAKOWSKI, GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE WORLD CONFEDERATION OF LABOR IS ALSO IN BANGKOK APPARENTLY FOR THE SAME PURPOSE). AAFLI AND AFL-CIO LEADERSHIP ARE REPORTEDLY STILL EXAMINING THIS QUESTION.

6. CHARGE TOLD AAFLI REPRESENTATIVES THAT THE DEPARTMENT IS CONCERNED ABOUT AAFLI'S DIFFICULTIES AS WELL AS THE GENERAL LABOR SITUATION IN THAILAND. HE SAID HE WOULD BE COMMUNICATING THIS CONCERN INFORMALLY BUT CLEARLY TO APPROPRIATE LEVELS OF RTG.

7. COMMENT: EMBASSY SHARES AAFLI'S CONCERN OVER THANIN GOVERNMENT'S RESTRICTIVE MEASURES DIRECTED AT ORGANIZED LABOR MOVEMENT WITH CONCOMITANT INCREASE IN TENSIONS AND LIKELIHOOD OF CONFRONTATION.

8. CHARGE AND OTHER EMBASSY OFFICIALS WILL CONVEY USG CONCERN TO CONFIDENTIAL

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RTG AS REQUESTED REFTEL AS WELL AS INFORMALLY WEIGH IN TO PERMIT AAFLI TO RESUME ACTIVITY. AS MINISTER SAMAK IS KEY PERSON IN FORMULATION OF RTG LABOR POLICY, CHARGE WILL SEEK EARLY APPOINTMENT WITH SAMAK TO DISCUSS AAFLI SITUATION AND TO MAKE REPRESENTATIONS OUTLINED REFTEL. SAMAK IS PRESENTLY OUT OF TOWN BUT WILL RETURN AUGUST 25.

9. EMBASSY IS PREPARING SUMMARY TELEGRAM OF RECENT LABOR EVENTS TO BE SUBMITTED SHORTLY.
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